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Administrators are advised to bring together voluntary and government agencies in welfare, health, housing, education, and employment as participants in developing a community action program. After assembling all available information on the poverty problem, they should develop a set of proposals to attack the causes of poverty, choose a specific area for the program, form a local community action organization, and get technical help if necessary. Guidelines are given on factors to be considered in assessing local needs and selecting a priority list of projects. Aspects of the program for which Federal money is available are listed. The Government will pay up to 90 percent of the cost of programs for the first two years.

Standards to be met are considered under the following headings: evidence of health and safety provisions for children; evidence of carefully selected supervisory, teaching, clerical, and custodial staff; selection of children based on heterogeneous cultural grouping, evidence of need, ages, physical maturity, and freedom from severe physical handicaps; small classes and low teacher-pupil ratios; a children's program which consists of compensatory education and enrichment and is suitable to age level; a program which involves parents and interprets the nursery school as a supplement to the home in the child's education; problem-oriented plans for inservice education; suitable and adequate equipment and facilities; and careful budgeting.

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GUIDES FOR SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS IN PREPARING APPLICATIONS FOR FUNDS FOR PROGRAMS FOR THREE AND FOUR YEAR OLD CHILDREN UNDER THE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY ACT, TITLE II-A (The Anti-Poverty Act)

April 1965

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK
The State Education Department
Division of School Supervision
Bureau of Child Development and Parent Education
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GUIDES FOR SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS IN PREPARING APPLICATIONS
FOR FUNDS FOR PROGRAMS FOR THREE AND FOUR YEAR OLD CHILDREN
UNDER THE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY ACT, TITLE II-A
(The Anti-Poverty Act)

The State Education Department has been asked by the Governor to review applications for educational programs under the Economic Opportunity Act. The purposes of these Guides is to help administrators prepare applications for funds under the Act and to indicate standards which it is hoped will be met in order to assure good programs in Project Head-Start and/or other programs for young children. It is intended that reviewers of applications will also use these standards as points of reference.

The application is sent directly to the Office of Economic Opportunity, Washington, D.C. 20506 with a copy to the Governor. At the time when the Washington Office reviews the application, the Governor forwards it to the Department for recommendations of approval or disapproval within the following 30 day period. The Bureau of Child Development and Parent Education reviews applications for these funds for the education of three and four-year-old children.

Section I, below, outlines three questions administrators ask which are common to all applications:

A. How Do You Begin?
B. How Do You Tell What is Needed in Your Community?
C. Who Will Pay for the Program?

The answers to these questions are direct quotations from a Public Affairs leaflet, The War on Poverty -- a Home Town Fight, The Office of Economic Opportunity.

Section II, below, outlines the standards for good programs for young children. Specific recommendations are made in significant areas. In reviewing applications, attention of reviewers will focus on evidence which indicates an interest in good standards and an intent to provide these for young children and their parents.

Section I Some Questions Administrators Ask

It may be helpful to review some questions facing administrators who may be struggling with finding answers.

A. How Do You Begin?

1. Bring together the appropriate voluntary and government agencies in welfare, health, housing, education and employment as participants in developing a Community Action program. Include leaders from the areas in which the program will operate.

2. Assemble all available information on the poverty problem. Identify the extent of poverty in the community and begin to determine major characteristics. List the problems in order of priority.

3. Develop a set of proposals to attack the causes of poverty. Determine what local resources are available to support such programs.

4. Decide on a specific geographical area for the program.

5. Form a local Community Action organization that includes not only government and voluntary organizations, but business, labor and other key civic organizations as well.

6. Ask for technical help if it is needed to plan your programs. This help can come directly from the Office of Economic Opportunity or from those States which have received technical assistance funds.

7. Contact the State Government to determine how its agencies and programs can help and can be integrated into the total local anti-poverty effort.

8. Develop projects in order of importance and ability to carry them through.

9. Apply to Community Action, Office of Economic Opportunity, for the detailed forms to submit your application.

B. <u>How Do You Tell What is Needed in Your Community?</u>

The problems of the poor must be assessed in more than money terms. Simply enumerating the low income families will not permit you to select a priority list of projects. Here are some of the factors you should sort out:

1. The number of low-income families, particularly those with children.

2. The extent of persistent unemployment and underemployment.

3. The number and proportion of people receiving cash or other assistance on a needs basis from public agencies or private organizations.

4. The number of migrant or transient low-income families.

5. School dropout rates, military service rejection rates and other evidence of low educational attainment.

6. The incidence of disease, disability, and infant mortality.

7. Housing conditions.

8. Adequacy of community facilities and services.

9. The incidence of crime and juvenile delinquency.

C. Who Will Pay for the Programs?

Federal money will be available (1) to help establish Community Action Groups, (2) to assist in developing programs, (3) to support those programs, (4) for technical aid, (5) for special research and demonstration projects, and (6) to train persons to work in Community Action Programs.

The Federal Government will pay up to 90% of the cost of Community Action Programs in the first two years. The balance, to be furnished by local Community Action groups, can be in cash or in kind, such as services and facilities, to support local programs.

Section II Standards for Programs for Three and Four-Year-Old Children

A. Evidence of Health and Safety Provisions for Children

1. Physical Facilities and Recommendation

It is taken for granted that if public school classrooms are used they will be safe and sanitary and that whatever remodelling is needed to adopt the building for use by three and four-year-old children will be in line with the standards below. When classrooms are housed in another location administrators will want to be sure that:

-- The building is safely constructed with the classrooms preferably on the first floor

-- The furnace is enclosed in a room of fireproof construction with a metal self-closing door and is free of flammable materials

-- The stairways have low banisters, lighting conditions are adequate, and radiators have protective covers

-- Toilet facilities preferably adjoin each classroom

-- There are at least two widely separated exits from each floor occupied by children

-- All doors open outward

Recommendation

The physical facilities occupied by three and four-year-old children meet at least the standards for approval of Temporary Quarters, The Division of Educational Facilities Planning, The State Education Department. It is preferred that the facilities conform to the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education for school buildings and grounds.

2. Physical Condition of Children and Requirement

Children are required to have a physical examination to insure that each child is free from infectious disease and severe physical handicap.

3. Physical Condition of Staff (Including Volunteers)

Necessary precautions including X-ray are taken to assure that each staff member is free from infectious

disease.

B. Evidence of Carefully Selected Staff to Work with Children

1. Qualified Professional Direction

In one building where there are one to three groups at any session, there should be a teacher-director who has had at least three years of experience in a nursery school and who holds a New York State Certificate in Early Childhood Education or in Elementary Education K-6 or N-6.

For a program with four or more groups in one building at any one time there should be a qualified non-teaching director who has had at least three years of experience teaching in a nursery school and who holds a New York State Certificate in Early Childhood Education or in Elementary Education K-6 or N-6.

When the program is located in five or more buildings or the total number of groups is ten or more, it is advisable to employ a full-time coordinator who has had at least three years of supervisory experience with teachers of three, four and five-year-old children and who holds a Certificate in Early Childhood Education.

2. Teaching Staff and Recommendations

Recommendations

The teacher in charge of each group is fully qualified and holds a New York State Certificate either in Early Childhood Education or in Elementary Education K-6.

An aide is employed in each group who is preferably drawn from the socio-economic community from which the children come. First preference of employment might well, but not necessarily, be given to parents of enrolled children.

Regularly scheduled volunteer aides are under the supervision of the director and are expected to participate in the inservice training program related to the program for young children.

3. Supplementary Services

Supplementary services may be available from the Board of Education or other community agencies; if not available provision may need to be made for:

-- At least one social worker for no more than 40 families for frequent home visiting and consultation with parents on family problems to develop understanding and cooperation between home and school

-- A school nurse-teacher to assist in health and safety problems

-- A psychological consultant to serve as a resource to staff members in understanding difficult behavior and in advising on case analyses

-- A school lunch supervisor to plan for hot lunches

4. Clerical Services

In large programs there is need for clerical services such as answering telephone calls, and keeping records of various kinds.

5. Custodial Services

If the services of a custodian in the public school are not available, a custodian is employed for daily cleaning. It is urged that where possible the custodian be obtained from the same socio-economic community as the children.

C. Selection of Children

1. Mixed Cultural Groups and Recommendation

Recommendation

It is strongly recommended that the children in every group be selected from varied cultural backgrounds. Since children can learn a great deal from one another, a mixture of cultural backgrounds is enriching.

2. Evidence of Need

Priority is given to children whose families receive cash or other assistance from public or private welfare agencies. In so far as possible, children from other low income families are included.

3. Ages

Children who are approximately three to five are enrolled. (This is usually interpreted as two years

nine months to four years nine months as of September 1.) In some communities where the number of young children is great, it may be wise to confine the ages to four-year-old children (i.e. children who will be eligible for public school kindergarten the following year) postponing accepting younger children.

4. Physical Maturity

Children selected for enrollment are able to care for their toileting needs with a reasonable amount of adult assistance.

5. Freedom from Severe Physical Handicaps

Children selected are free from severe physical handicaps. Those children so handicapped they cannot be selected are referred for all possible corrective measures.

D. Organization of Groups and Recommendations

1. Size of Groups

Each group is small enough for the teacher to give individual guidance and attention to the children and to prevent overstimulation.

Recommendation

The number of children enrolled is:

No more than 20 four year olds in one group
No more than 15 three year olds in one group

2. Teacher-Pupil Ratio

The ratio of adults to children should insure adequate safety and supervision. It should be adequate to foster children's maximum learning and development. There should always be more than one adult in attendance at all times.

As a general rule the younger the child, the smaller the group assigned to a teacher. There should be no more than 20 children in one group in one room.

Recommendation

Four three year olds the ratio of children to adults is not greater than ten to one.

For four year olds the ratio of children to adults

is not greater than 15 to one.

E. The Program for Children

1. Compensatory Education and Enrichment

The curriculum provides opportunity for the child to learn through muscular activity, imaginative and dramatic interpretation, experimenting, singing, enjoying books and stories, painting, solving problems and relating to both children and adults.

The curriculum provides ample experience with functional language on the child's level. This includes experiences which help the child to build a meaningful vocabulary and to hear words used in sentences and to relate objects to words, and to begin gradually to use words in a variety of situations.

The curriculum provides ample opportunity for the child to experience success in many ways at school.

The curriculum helps the child to build a positive self-concept as he copes with people, materials, and words in his environment.

The curriculum provides rich opportunities for developing perceptions related to shape, size, color, sound and meanings.

Children move freely from one activity to another since the attention span of young children is usually short.

2. Suitability to the Age Level and Recommendation

Recommendation

It is strongly recommended that the curriculum for children be adapted to the age level of the children and to what is known about how young children learn.

F. The Program for Parents and Recommendations

1. Program Involves Parents

The parents have an opportunity to make whatever contribution they can and are interested in making to the school. Some parents may want to give occasional assistance to the teacher on a free day. Some parents may wish to be included in such activities as helping mend toys, or make doll clothes and curtains for the school. There may be other activities in which parents

become involved and interested and which help them feel "this is our school."

2. Program for Parents Interprets Nursery School as Supplement to the Home in Child's Education and Recommendation

Parents have an opportunity to know what is happening to their children in the program. Much of the time this interpretation is carried out by the teacher on an individual basis particularly in the first few months of school. There are times when actual demonstrations such as looking at pictures with the child are worked out in groups of two or three parents.

Recommendations

The parent education program gives due recognition to the development of a positive self-image by parents as well as by the children.

The parent education program helps parents appreciate their own children.

It is made clear to parents, staff, and community that the nursery school does not replace the home but, rather, that it supplements the home in making a valuable contribution to the children's education.

G. Problem-Oriented Plans for Inservice Education and Recommendation

1. Purpose of Inservice Education

The inservice program of the staff increases understanding of young children and their families in disadvantaged neighborhoods and provides greater insight into ways of meeting their needs through the nursery school program.

2. How Carried On

This program is carried on in small staff groups so as to contribute to the development of the nursery school program. The inservice education includes a consideration of problems raised by any staff member in relation to routines, policies for the best guidance of children, better understanding of each child, or the ways in which the program can be adapted to individual learning needs.

Staff members are encouraged to avail themselves of appropriate college courses and of local or regional workshops.

Recommendation

Plans are developed for a problem-oriented program of weekly inservice education for all staff members.

H. Plans for Equipment and Facilities and Recommendations

1. Indoor and Outdoor Space

At least 30 to 35 square feet per child should be planned for indoor activity (exclusive of space for outdoor clothing, porches, kitchen, isolation room, toilets, and storage space.)

Outdoor space should be enclosed, free of hazards, well drained and easily accessible to toilet facilities and indoor rooms. It is desirable to have at least 200 square feet per child for such outdoor space.

2. Indoor and Outdoor Equipment and Materials

Centers of Interest to Foster Children's Learning

The room should be organized around centers of interest. It should be possible for some children to work in a block building area dramatizing their own experiences without interfering with others who are listening to a story, looking at picture books in the library corner, or using puzzles.

Arrangement for Outdoor Play Area

It is important that young children have a separate outdoor play area with equipment for vigorous activity. This should include a climber, tricycles, wagons, and large building blocks all carefully placed to assure children's safety and to encourage learning and growth.

Facilities for Outdoor Clothing

Provision should be made so that children may develop responsibility for their own clothing. This requires small open lockers or low hooks, far enough apart so that one child's outdoor clothing can hang separately from anothers.

Accessibility of Materials

Equipment and materials should be readily available to children on low open shelves. In this way the need for proper care and order of materials

as well as independence and responsibility can be fostered.

Size of Equipment

Equipment must be suitable to the size of the children. Tables and chairs should be of proper size for children to have their feet on the floor, their backs against the back of the chair. The tables should be at elbow height when children are seated.

The height of toilets and wash bowls should be such that children can learn to use them independently. If not child-size, low platforms or safe steps should be provided.

Equipment for Development of Physical Skills

Lack of opportunity for physical activity is characteristic of many impoverished homes. Therefore, any plan for equipment should include the promotion of essential physical abilities. In addition varied sized unit blocks, large building blocks, wagons and boards are needed. For small muscle development, materials should include puzzles, scissors, large crayons, arithmetic materials, paint brushes, sand toys, clay, simple musical instruments, a phonograph and science materials.

Arrangements for Snack and Lunch

It is suggested that provisions be made for a mid-morning and/or mid-afternoon snack and, wherever possible, for a nutritious hot noon meal to be served. The snack may consist of either juice and graham crackers or milk and graham crackers depending on the children's home diets. The noon meal may come at the end of a morning program, the beginning of an afternoon program, or it may be a part of an all-day program depending on a variety of factors to be considered. Snacks and the noon meal contribute to good nutrition and to a reduction of fatigue. Further, they offer opportunities for children's learnings related to table-time conversation and responsibilities in serving and clearing the tables.

Space for Rest

In a half-day program there is some opportunity for prone rest in an area protected from drafts.

Individually marked rugs are available for this purpose.

In an all-day program individually marked cots are provided in sufficient space so each child may rest away from drafts and from other cots preferably located at least two feet apart. If the space between the cots is less, low separating screens are used.

Recommendations

Sufficient indoor and outdoor space are available. The equipment and materials are of sufficient quantity and quality to provide a program for children as described above. (For further details see bulletin, Equipment for Children in Kindergarten, Bureau of Child Development and Parent Education, State Education Department, Albany, New York 12224.)

I. The Budget

1. Importance of Budget

The importance of careful budgeting cannot be over-estimated. In instances where services and facilities are not specified in the budget, there is some indication of the other sources, such as the Board of Education, from which services and facilities are to come. Items as rent, heat and light, bus transportation and partial services of school staff may be contributed but are so indicated.

2. Sample Budgets (Attached)

For detailed sample budgets see attached, The Cost of Equipping and Operating Schools for Very Young Children Three Years - Four Years.

Note: For further assistance write to the Bureau of Child Development and Parent Education, State Education Department, Albany, New York, 12224.